Indian and Northern Affairs Canada / Affaires indiennes et du Nord Canada

NWT Plain Talk

On Land and Self-government

Fall 2003

After the Tłı̨chǫ Agreement was signed, the Prime Minister joined in a circle dance with other guests including Tłı̨chǫ Elder Alexis Arrowmaker on the left and Grand Chief Joe Rabesca on the right.

"Today, with this agreement, we are strengthening Canada's federation. We are committing ourselves to a new North, one that represents the vision and the spirit of the people who live here."

– Prime Minister Jean Chretien

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Tłı̨chǫ Agreement "represents what is best about Canada"

Once again, the Northwest Territories has been the site of history in the making. This time, the eyes of the world were on the community of Rae-Edzo and the achievement of the Tłı̨chǫ people.

On Monday, August 25, hundreds of people gathered in Rae from all over the territory and the country to witness and celebrate the signing of the territory's first ever combined land claim and self-government agreement. This means that for the first time, an Aboriginal group in the Northwest Territories will be in a position to own lands and be the primary government on those lands.

It was an event worthy not only of national media attention in Canada, but one that attracted interest from media as far away as the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany.

In what seems to have become a tradition in the North, Aboriginal groups are leading the way in working with other levels of government to define and implement their land and self-government aspirations.

"This agreement will serve as a model for other indigenous communities in Canada and in other countries, a model for implementing self-government. The agreement defines rights and shows the world how diversity creates strength and how partnership builds success," said Prime Minister Jean Chretien, who made the trip to Rae to join the celebration.

"This is unique to Canada. Nowhere else in the world is anyone attempting to combine three levels of government: federal, territorial and Aboriginal. In Canada, we believe in treaty and Aboriginal rights, that there is another level of government that is constitutionally protected," added Canada's Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Robert D. Nault.

Want to know more about the Tłı̨chǫ Agreement?

Visit the following web sites:

WWW.dlne-inac.gc.ca

WWW.tlicho.com

WWW.maa.gov.nt.ca

See pages 2 and 3 for more information about The Tłı̨chǫ Agreement and photos of the signing ceremony.

The purpose of our newsletter is to keep you informed on the progress of land and self-government negotiations in the Northwest Territories, and to provide some answers to frequently asked questions. We also feature the people and communities involved in negotiations, celebrate milestones, and announce upcoming events. On behalf of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), we hope you will find our newsletter informative and easy to read.

Tłı̨chǫ signing steeped in history

The signing of the Tłı̨chǫ Agreement is a significant accomplishment for Tłı̨chǫ (Dogrib) people, a landmark in a long journey. The ceremony in Rae incorporated many reminders of this history.

This signing closely coincided with the **82nd anniversary of Treaty 11**, signed on August 22, 1921.

In 1968, **Jean Chrétien**, then Minister of Indian Affairs, met with Dogrib Chief **Jimmy Bruneau** in Rae. They discussed the future of the Dogrib people and Canada's role in that future. It was the first significant meeting between the the Dogrib and the Government of Canada since the signing of Treaty 11. The Tłı̨chǫ people still view this meeting as a milestone in their history, representing the beginning of their modern relationship with government. Mr. Chrétien also attended the opening of the Chief Jimmy Bruneau School in 1972.

Alexis Arrowmaker was a child at the time of the Treaty 11 signing. He was also present for the Tłı̨chǫ Agreement celebration, this time taking his place as an honoured Tłı̨chǫ Elder. He opened the ceremony with a prayer. Mr. Arrowmaker's life has been intimately connected to the Tłı̨chǫ people's journey to define their place in the NWT. He is a former Chief of Rae-Edzo (1971-76) and remains one of the Council advisors.

Jimmy Martin, a direct descendant of Chief Monfwi, who signed Treaty 11, delivered the closing prayer.

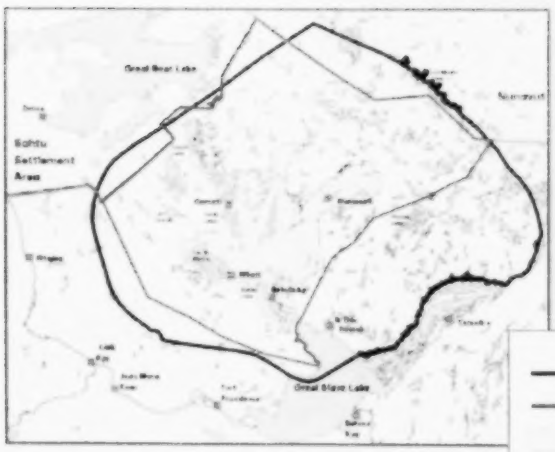
The Government of Canada offered **specially-crafted medallions** to commemorate this milestone in an evolving relationship. Reminiscent of the Treaty medallions Canada presented in 1921, they featured an image of then-minister Jean Chrétien and Chief Jimmy Bruneau when they met in 1972, shook hands and launched the journey towards a new, modern relationship between Canada and the Tłı̨chǫ people. Medallions were presented to Prime Minister Chrétien, Grand Chief Rabesca, the chief of each of the Tłı̨chǫ communities, the members of the Tłı̨chǫ elders council, Premier Kakfwi and Minister Jim Antoine. They mark an achievement rooted in years of hard work, cooperation, compromise ... and a very important handshake.

Drummers from the four Tłı̨chǫ communities opened the ceremony with traditional prayer drumming.

The Prime Minister was photographed with the Tłı̨chǫ Elders Advisory Committee (from left to right) Joe Mackie, Alexis Arrowmaker, Harry Simpson and Jimmy Rabesca as the chiefs of the four Tłı̨chǫ communities looked on.

The celebration continued after the signing ceremony with more drumming and dancing.

Tłı̨chǫ Agreement map



The Tłı̨chǫ Agreement has provisions relating to four geographic areas. The largest area is **Mǫwhì Gogha Dè Nıjtlèè**, which is the traditional use area of the Tłı̨chǫ. In this area, the Tłı̨chǫ will be able to exercise most of the rights set out in the Agreement and all four of the Tłı̨chǫ communities fall within this area.

The second area is a resource management area, called **Wek'èezhìı**. Most of this area is within **Mǫwhì Gogha Dè Nıjtlèè**. It is bordered by land claims settlement areas and traditional areas of neighbouring Aboriginal groups.

The third geographic area is called **Tłı̨chǫ Lands**. These are the lands that the Tłı̨chǫ will own.

A fourth geographic area is **Ezǫdzìtì**, an area of historical and cultural importance to the Tłı̨chǫ. The Tłı̨chǫ do not own this land or have any additional harvesting or management rights on it. However, the area has been protected in the interest of preserving its historical and cultural importance to the Tłı̨chǫ people.

"Strong like two people"

The legacy of Elizabeth Mackenzie

The Tłı̨chǫ Agreement was signed at Elizabeth Mackenzie School, named in honour of a woman who worked to combine Tłı̨chǫ tradition and culture and elements of mainstream Canadian cultures in her teaching. Tłı̨chǫ people remember what Mackenzie said about the first written policy on Indian education in 1972: "So if children are taught in two cultures equally, they will be strong like two people what the old Chief [Jimmy Bruneau] talked about is for some good time in the future he looked far ahead for us, and we gain from it." "Strong like two people" remains a key part of the Tłı̨chǫ vision and approach.

NWTMN interim measures pre-screening process

As part of the Interim Measures Agreement they signed in June 2002, the Northwest Territory Metis Nation (NWTMN), the Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories have established pre-screening processes that will allow the NWTMN to review applications for various licences, permits, and dispositions of lands within the agreement area. This is done through "schedules" which specify how the federal and territorial government and/or regulatory bodies (such as the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board) will provide information to the NWTMN and how the NWTMN will provide its input into each process. Shown here from left to right are George Kurszewski, negotiator for the NWTMN, Eric Maldoff, Chief Federal Negotiator, and Tim O'Loan, former negotiator for the Government of the Northwest Territories. Five schedules have been completed to date on the following subjects: Land Use Permits, Water Licences, Surface Federal Crown Lands, National Parks and Protected Areas, and Territorial Parks.

AT A GLANCE:

What's in the Tłı̨chǫ Agreement?

LAND: The Tłı̨chǫ Government will own **approximately 39,000 square kilometres of land** in a block that links the four Tłı̨chǫ communities of **Behchokǫ̀** (Rae-Edzo), Whatì (Lac la Martre), **Gamèti** (Rae Lakes), and Wekweètì (Snare Lake). That's roughly 3% of the land mass in the Northwest Territories and represents an area slightly smaller than Switzerland.

FINANCIAL: The Tłı̨chǫ Government will receive **about $152 million over a number of years** as well as a share of resource royalties received by government annually from the Mackenzie Valley.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: The Tłı̨chǫ Agreement describes the **traditional area of the Tłı̨chǫ (Mǫwhì Gogha Dè Nı̨tłèè), and a resource management area (Wek'èezhìı)** where the Tłı̨chǫ will share in land, water and resource management through participation on boards. A board will be established to manage wildlife in Wek'èezhìı and another board will be established to regulate land and water use in Wek'èezhìı.

GOVERNMENT: The **Tłı̨chǫ Government** will be created and replace existing band structures. It will have the ability to make laws in a wide range of areas on Tłı̨chǫ lands and over Tłı̨chǫ Citizens. There will, however, be some types of laws that the Tłı̨chǫ Government cannot make. Tłı̨chǫ laws will not displace federal or territorial laws, they will operate alongside each other. The Tłı̨chǫ Agreement includes direction on which law will apply when there is a conflict, depending on the situation.

There will be a **public community government** in each Tłı̨chǫ community established by territorial legislation. A community government will have guaranteed Tłı̨chǫ representation and have the power to enact laws relating to municipal matters. It will also own and manage most of the land in the community.

HARVESTING AND ACCESS: Subject to certain limitations, Tłı̨chǫ citizens will have **harvesting rights throughout Mǫwhì Gogha Dè Nı̨tłèè** at all times of the year. They will also have **the right of access to all lands in Mǫwhì Gogha Dè Nı̨tłèè** for the purpose of harvesting wildlife.

CULTURE AND HERITAGE: The agreement reflects the importance the Tłı̨chǫ place on the survival of their language and culture and gives them the tools to protect and sustain them. The Tłı̨chǫ Government will be the **custodian of heritage resources** on Tłı̨chǫ lands and will have the ability to name or rename lakes, rivers, mountains, and other geographic features on their lands.

RATIFICATION: The Tłı̨chǫ Agreement was **ratified by Tłı̨chǫ eligible voters** on June 26 and 27, 2003. A total of 93% of the Tłı̨chǫ participated in the vote, and over 84% of those who were eligible to vote were in favour of the Agreement. Now, the **territorial and federal governments will need to pass legislation** to bring the Tłı̨chǫ Agreement into force.

Feast and dance mark signing of Dél̨ı̨ne Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle

The community of **Dél̨ı̨ne**, on the shores of Great Bear Lake, has taken another big step towards self-government.

On August 23rd, Raymond Tutcho, chief of the Dél̨ı̨ne Dene Band and John Tutcho, president of the Dél̨ı̨ne Land Corporation, welcomed representatives of the governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories to their community to sign the Dél̨ı̨ne Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle (AIP). People present for the signing celebrated with a delicious feast and a drum dance.

Dél̨ı̨ne is the first Sahtu community to participate in self-government negotiations under the Sahtu Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim, which was signed in 1993. That agreement gave each community in the Sahtu the option to negotiate its own self-government arrangement.

The federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Robert D. Nault, signed the AIP on behalf of the Government of Canada and remarked on its significance: "Building on their land claim agreement, self-government will allow the people of Dél̨ı̨ne to chart their own course. The Government of Canada believes that a strong, self sufficient government is key to the quality of life of its residents."

Self-government will help the people of Dél̨ı̨ne maintain their strong sense of spirituality and close ties to the land. It will also allow them to take more control over their economic future. The Dél̨ı̨ne Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle is the first to describe how an Aboriginal public government would work in the Sahtu Settlement Area. This new system of government will be known as the Dél̨ı̨ne First Nation Government (DFNG), and it will be composed of an ?Ehkw'atıde (Government Leader), a Main Council, a Justice Council and Elders Council.

The AIP provides for the DFNG to have law-making powers over the administration, management and operation of its government structures, as well as elections, Dél̨ı̨ne First Nation citizenship, education and training, local services, adoption, child and family services, social housing, income support, language, culture and spirituality, and traditional healing services. Additional jurisdictions will also be discussed in negotiations leading to a final agreement.

Elders, youth and community members witnessed the official signing ceremony for the Dél̨ı̨ne Self-Government AIP. Speakers acknowledged the work and guidance of elders over the years.

"I think it's people that have been driving this self-government from previous years. The work has been done before us that kind of gave us a path to work on... We never let go of our elders' ideas and I think we should really congratulate the elders," Chief Tutcho told the crowd.

Elders Paul Baton, Leon Modeste and Alfred Tanton spoke at the signing. Mr. Tanton remembers the earlier days of the land claim: "We wanted to have our own government like we did before."

And so the people of Dél̨ı̨ne, the Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories celebrated another step in their journey towards that shared goal. With an AIP in place, negotiators will now focus on achieving a final agreement, the last step in self-government negotiations. Once implemented, a final agreement will affect the 650 residents of Dél̨ı̨ne, as well as approximately 200 other Sahtu Dene and Métis people living outside the community.

Chief Federal Negotiator Kevan Floor is pictured here shaking hands with Elder Paul Baton when the Dél̨ı̨ne Self-Government AIP was initialled in June.

Just Plain Fun

Land and self-government negotiations are serious business, but there is always room for a little fun. That's what this section of *Plain Talk* is about! This is where you get to have fun while learning something new.

The Tłı̨chǫ Agreement was signed in August. We at *Plain Talk* thought it would be a good time to do a bit of research on Tłı̨chǫ words. Here is what we found out, thanks to the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council.

Tłı̨chǫ Word	Pronunciation	Meaning
Tłı̨chǫ	***tlee-chon***	"Dogrib"
Mǫwhì Gogha De Nı̨ıtłèe	***mon-fwee go-ga de-neat-lay***	the traditional area of the Tłı̨chǫ First Nation, described by Chief Monfwi during the signing of Treaty 11 in 1921
Wek'èezhìı	***way-keh-zi***	defines the "management area" of the Tłı̨chǫ Agreement
Behchokǫ̀	***bay-cho-ko***	Tłı̨chǫ name for Rae-Edzo
Whatı	***what-tea***	Tłı̨chǫ name for Lac La Martre
Gameti	***gam-ma-tea***	Tłı̨chǫ name for Rae Lakes
Wekweèti	***wek-way-tea***	Tłı̨chǫ name for Snare Lake
Ezǫdzìtì	***eh-zod-ze-tea***	A Tłı̨chǫ heritage area

There are more facts, games and activities on DIAND's Youth Buzz
http://nwt.inac.gc.ca/youthbuzz

You were asking...

Q. What happens after an agreement like the Tłı̨chǫ Agreement is signed?

A. Once an agreement is signed, the territorial and federal governments need to draft and enact legislation to bring the agreements into force. Though this marks the end of one process, it is also the beginning of another process called "implementation". While the Tłı̨chǫ Agreement creates a new relationship between the Tłı̨chǫ, territorial and federal governments, there are many steps required to make the Agreement and the new relationship a reality. A detailed document called an Implementation Plan (signed at the same time as the Tłı̨chǫ Agreement) lays out a roadmap for that work. The plan will take many years to complete and will be managed by representatives from each of the three governments working together.

Do you have a question about land or self-government negotiations in the NWT? We'd be happy to provide an answer. Contact the address listed below.

OUR VISION

The NWT region of DIAND is a respected partner in a strong and healthy Northwest Territories.

We strive for:
- respectful, effective relationships with Aboriginal people;
- creating and enhancing opportunities for all Northerners;
- responsible resource development in healthy ecosystems;
- northern control over northern resources;
- responsive and accountable northern government as partners; and
- national initiatives that reflect the interests of all Northerners.

On the web

Visit the following for more information:

Government of Canada programs and services
Government of Canada site:
www.gc.ca

DIAND
Northwest Territories Region site:
www.nwt-tno.inac-ainc.gc.ca

Various claims agreements
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada site:
www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/agr/index_e.html

***Plain Talk* on the web**
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada site:
www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nt/pt/index_e.html

For Some Things to Read...

Here's who to contact:
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Plain Talk on Land and Self-government is produced by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in the NWT to help northerners understand these concepts, how they work, and what they mean in our day-to-day lives. It is not a legal document.